UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
7th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 12 October 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.7
29 October 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-81511 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. LUEDIG (Estonia) said that the proposed agenda for development should deal not only with the functions of the United Nations system but also with guidelines for overall development, international finance and the conversion of the international arms and munitions industry for peaceful purposes.

2. The free movement of capital through international financial markets had, in some cases, overwhelmed Member States' abilities to evaluate and control the sudden impact of large capital flows. The agenda's guidelines for international finance should encourage access to funds while promoting international financial stability. Measures should be taken to prevent a new wave of financial neocolonialist exploitation under the guise of free enterprise.

3. The agenda for development should complement, renew and enhance the principles of sustainable development contained in Agenda 21. An integrative approach should be taken to encourage the world financial system to give every country equal access to the financial means of implementing sustainable development programmes and projects at a reasonable cost.

4. Converting the international munitions industry to peace-time production was an enormous task, but one with foreseeable, positive and long-term benefits. The money, time and talent currently being wasted on weapons design and manufacture should be channelled into sustainable development programmes and projects. The longer the arms industry avoided the conversion process, the longer that large sector of the world economy would act as a drag on international economic recovery. The Committee should elaborate economic and social policies and promote technical assistance that encouraged alternatives to the manufacture of arms.

5. His delegation strongly believed that the Committee should formally institute closer coordination with the restructuring efforts taking place in the Fifth Committee. Through the new and planned mechanisms that reported only to the Fifth Committee, the Second Committee could become more aware of the actual functioning and effectiveness of the agencies, programmes and projects that reported to it. If the Committee's activities were to become more accountable, coordinated and relevant, it must adopt an "inter-committee" approach which would enable it to assess the ongoing effects of its work, consolidate agenda items, shorten formal debate and become more detail- and action-oriented. To that end, the Committee should recommend the creation of stringent performance accountability mechanisms in the resolutions that it adopted at the current session. Such mechanisms would enable the Committee to coordinate its work with that of the Secretariat and reduce its dependence on long and vague oral and written reports.

6. His delegation supported current efforts to restructure the Second Committee and the organs that reported to it. It also supported the establishment of smaller executive boards, provided that more useful and fully transparent reporting by agencies, programmes and projects was instituted. Such reporting should be made available to all interested Member States.

(Mr. Luedig, Estonia)

7. His delegation viewed the establishment of interim offices as a non-political attempt to reduce costs while improving communications between the countries in which they were established and the United Nations system; it was concerned that, if the interim offices were discontinued, the Organization might return to the practice of conducting expensive fact-finding missions.

8. Mr. SHREIM (Observer for Palestine) said that the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization had been a positive first step towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Declaration fell short of the ambitions and aspirations of the Palestinian people, but nevertheless recognized its legitimate rights, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as its sole representative. The most significant component of the agreement was its affirmation that a comprehensive peace would be based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The agreement would give the Palestinian people full control over all aspects of its domestic affairs and, during the interim period, would allow for the return of all Palestinians displaced in 1967.

9. The main challenge facing the Palestinian people in the immediate future was the process of economic development and institution-building. The urgency of concerted and well-coordinated international action to reverse the economic and social decline in the occupied territories, particularly in Gaza, could not be overemphasized. The long years of struggle under occupation had led to the grave deterioration of Palestinian national institutions, which hindered their ability to deal with the challenges ahead. Moreover, as a result of the prolonged occupation, the Palestinian economy had declined sharply.

10. His delegation welcomed the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace, which had been held on 1 October 1993 in Washington, D.C., and looked forward to the rapid implementation of the decisions reached at the Conference. The Palestinian Development Programme, which had recently been introduced by the PLO, should serve as a starting-point for concerted action by the international community. In that regard, special priority should be given to the complex problems besetting the Gaza Strip. Immediate job-creation schemes, infrastructure facilities, technical assistance to support efforts to establish an efficient public administration system, and enhanced human resources development and services were among the many needs of the Palestinian people.

11. At the current stage, the United Nations had an important role to play, both in the peace process and in the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people. His delegation welcomed the high-level task force established by the Secretary-General immediately following the signing of the Declaration of Principles and the mission that he had dispatched to Tunis and the occupied territory for the purpose of meeting with Palestinian leaders and discussing ways in which the United Nations could assist in the implementation of the agreement.

12. Mr. BOUCHER (World Bank) said that the World Bank had taken a number of key measures to meet the growing demands of developing member countries. Recognizing the formidable tasks faced by countries with economies in transition, the Bank had moved quickly to adapt its organizational structure and enhance its technical capacity to meet the full-service requirements of new member countries, without reducing services to traditional members, particularly the poorest countries. More than 20 new members had joined the Bank in the past two years.

13. In South Africa, the World Bank had been working closely with all parties involved to analyse that country's most urgent development needs. In the light of steady progress on the political front and the lifting of most economic sanctions, the Bank was well positioned to launch a major assistance programme, at the appropriate time, to help accelerate development in a democratic South Africa.

14. The historic accord between Israel and the PLO was the most recent development in the drama of global change. In response to the major parties to the peace process, the World Bank had played a supportive role through its economic work in the occupied territories. The Bank had already begun work on the establishment of a $53 million trust fund for technical assistance, training and project preparation, and of an emergency assistance project, to be cofinanced by other donors, that would focus on vital social and physical infrastructure, including logistical support for establishing the new administration. In addition, the Bank was seeking approval for $50 million, on concessional terms, to initiate lending in Gaza.

15. In fiscal year 1993, the World Bank had committed a record $23.7 billion in new lending. In its effort to reduce poverty, the Bank's two-track strategy supported growth that made efficient use of the poor's most abundant asset - their labour - and fostered widespread access to basic social services, particularly primary health care, nutrition, education and family-planning services.

16. In the context of growing cooperation to fight poverty, the Bank welcomed the forthcoming World Summit on Social Development. It would cooperate closely with other institutions of the United Nations system in providing technical support and would participate actively in the preparatory process. The Bank was also involved in the preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development.

17. In order to strengthen support for poverty reduction, the International Development Association (IDA) required adequate resources. The World Bank therefore welcomed the recent replenishment of that concessional facility at $18 billion. When IDA reflows, estimated at $4 billion, were taken into account, concessional commitments could reach $22 billion during fiscal years 1994-1996. As in previous years, between 40 and 50 per cent of those funds would be allocated to Africa.

18. Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Bank had intensified its support for sustainable development. In fiscal year 1993, a record $2 billion had been committed to environmental protection and improvement. With a view to implementing Agenda 21, the World Bank was

(Mr. Boucher, World Bank)

cooperating closely with the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development. The Bank was implementing the Global Environment Facility jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the process of completing the pilot phase in preparing for restructuring and replenishment was under way. As of June 1993, the Global Environment Facility had committed $468 million for 53 investment projects managed by the World Bank.

19. For the World Bank, effective implementation of the projects it supported was crucial. The Bank was assisting countries in implementing 1,800 projects and programmes representing some $370 billion in investments supported by the Bank, other financial agencies and developing countries themselves. The Bank was endeavouring to simplify project design, foster greater involvement by borrowing countries and concerned communities, especially the poor, in planning and execution, improve monitoring of project objectives and, more generally, place greater emphasis on the sustainability of projects.

20. While respecting its relationship of trust with its borrowers and the need to maintain confidentiality of certain types of information, the Bank would make a wide range of Bank documents public, including staff appraisal reports of approved projects, country economic and sector reports, environmental assessment of Bank projects, and sectoral policy papers. Those measures would be bolstered by the establishment of a Public Information Centre to facilitate access to information on Bank policies, technical materials and operational activities.

21. The Bank had recently established an Inspection Panel designed to complement the responsibilities and functions of existing mechanisms for quality control in project preparation and implementation. While the Panel would not be a regular feature of the Bank's operational work, it would provide a safety net for use in exceptional circumstances in which the Bank's own policies and procedures might not have been followed appropriately.

22. Mr. BABA (Uganda) said that changes had taken place in Africa that had resulted in economic restructuring and a new focus on regional organizations. In many African countries, the democratization process was in full swing. More than two dozen regimes had changed Governments through the process of the expanded participation of their peoples, and many more were moving in that direction. Throughout the continent, new leaders were seeking to develop and find new forms of governance that would improve the lives of ordinary citizens while taking account of economic realities.

23. The economies of most African States were in the doldrums. The debt of sub-Saharan Africa alone was approximately $178 billion, or roughly 109 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP). There had been almost no new internal investment, and foreign investment represented a paltry 1.2 per cent of world investment. Official development assistance (ODA) in real terms remained static. In real dollars, aid flows were no greater than they had been in 1980.

24. The Organization's disproportionate focus on peace-keeping had yet to be matched by a similar focus on the crisis of development in developing countries. Many commitments intended to strengthen international cooperation and promote economic development remained largely unfulfilled. The implementation of

(Mr. Baba, Uganda)

Agenda 21 had hardly begun, commitments on financial resources and transfer of technology had not yet been met, and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had not seen the light of day. The failure to meet those commitments was a source of great disappointment to all developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa.

25. Africa required investment incentives similar to those being offered to other regions. The continent could not grow without major investment in human resources development. African institutions of higher learning suffered from financial shortfalls, brain drains, deteriorating infrastructures and technological marginalization.

26. Debt-service payments prevented African countries from guaranteeing their peoples the basic rights to food, shelter, clothing, employment, health services, education and a clean environment. Current debt burdens were a major obstacle to sustainable development. Concrete action must therefore be taken to correct that morally, economically and environmentally unacceptable situation.

27. Regional economic organizations must be strengthened and supported. Those organizations should strengthen their ties with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which should, in turn, establish closer ties between themselves in order to provide better support to regional economic organizations. So far, very little was being done to promote such cooperation.

28. Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that in an economically interdependent world, the most acute problem facing the developing countries was the uncertainty of world economic trends. The developing countries were more vulnerable to changes in the world economy; thus, without a nurturing international economic environment, they had little hope of revitalizing their economies. Unfortunately, those countries, which represented 80 per cent of the world's population, had also been excluded from decision-making on economic policy, which took place outside the framework of the United Nations. Perhaps the reformed Economic and Social Council, particularly its high-level segment, with ministerial participation, would be a more appropriate forum for policy coordination. As the Council was characterized by transparency, democracy and equitable representation, it was regrettable that its high-level segment had not yet realized the significant role it could play in the global economy.

29. At a time of decreased ODA and uncertainty regarding voluntary contributions to various United Nations funds and programmes, there was a disturbing trend towards providing short-term funds to developing countries which imperilled many ongoing development projects. His delegation supported the "tripartite approach" proposed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 in order to deal with the still intolerable debt burden. At the same time, international financial institutions and commercial creditors should extend debt relief to those developing countries which had failed to meet their obligations not for lack of will but because of the unexpected decline in their export earnings and the impact of adjustment policies. Adequate external financial support for adjustment and reform measures was critical. Recent

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

political developments in the world, the decline in ODA and the increased demand for financing and investment in both developing countries and economies in transition made it more urgent than ever to convene an international conference on the financing of development. His delegation hoped that the details of the conference would be defined at the current session of the General Assembly.

30. Major investment decisions, especially capital formation in trade-related activities, hinged on the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Their stalemate was yet another cause of uncertainty in a world economy where protectionist policies were on the rise. It was ironic that the advocates of free, market-based economies at the national level showed no commitment to a free, transparent and non-discriminatory trading system at the international level. Certain developed countries had also taken an unjust approach towards international economic cooperation by setting conditions for development assistance, based on political considerations.

31. Many commitments were yet to be honoured under Agenda 21, which provided for support to sustainable development in developing countries. His delegation hoped that the promises made by developed countries at the first substantive session of the Commission on Sustainable Development would be kept. In conclusion, his delegation believed that the enhancement of multilateral cooperation did not call for new instruments but rather political will to implement existing instruments such as the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, Agenda 21 and the final documents adopted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its eighth session.

32. Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan), pointing to staggering population growth in the twentieth century - from 1.5 billion at the turn of the century to the current 5.5 billion, and a projected 8.5 billion by the year 2025 - said that his delegation attached great importance to the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held at Cairo in 1994.

33. Water was an issue whose importance had been underestimated. Over one half of the world's population had no access to a safe, dependable water supply, and water-borne diseases were one of the main causes of death in developing countries. Water had always been a threat to peace and security in various parts of the world. Located in a region where water was very scarce, Jordan attached special importance to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, which would help the countries of the region to solve their common water problem.

34. Jordan also hoped that the international community would alleviate the heavy debt burden confronting it and many developing countries. It attached great importance to the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round, particularly since failure to establish a just and equitable trading system would have a negative impact on the democratic reforms being implemented by many developing countries.

35. Enhanced regional cooperation would promote North-South dialogue and cooperation. The signing of a peace agenda between Jordan and Israel marked a

(Mr. Ammarin, Jordan)

significant step towards regional cooperation on such issues as water, development, refugees, and finance. Jordan was committed to sustainable development, and had been one of the first countries in the region to establish a national strategy for environmental protection. It had ratified both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Financing remained the chief obstacle to the implementation of Agenda 21, especially since many developing countries, including Jordan, still had to contend with the problem of underdevelopment itself.

36. Mr. SYED SHAH (Bangladesh) said that the deteriorating economic situation in most developing countries during the post-cold-war era was indeed disturbing. One fifth of the world's population still lived in absolute poverty, and the economic situation of the least developed countries had not improved. Although the developing countries were primarily responsible for their own socio-economic development, they would be unable to continue reforming their economies, making their public sectors more efficient and promoting private enterprise without a supportive international environment. A strategy for their sustainable development must be based on an increase in the flow of development resources. Bangladesh would support all realistic measures to mobilize additional resources for development. His delegation was also concerned that regional integration in the developed world might lead to additional restrictions on imports from developing countries. A successful outcome to the Uruguay Round would ensure broader market access for the products of developing countries, thereby helping to reactivate their growth and development.

37. Thus far, the international response to the external debt problem had been inadequate. His delegation hoped that new approaches would be formulated to address the problem of developing countries' external debt, particularly in the least developed countries, whose debt accounted for nearly three quarters of their combined gross domestic product.

38. Environmental degradation was a serious problem in developing countries and Bangladesh welcomed the outcome of the first substantive session of the Commission on Sustainable Development as a step towards the implementation of Agenda 21. It believed that the inter-sessional ad hoc open-ended working groups on finance and technology would develop concrete strategies to that end.

39. His delegation looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on an agenda for development, and hoped that it would focus on the dire economic situation of the poorest countries of the world. Existing consensus documents such as the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Cartagena Commitment: A New Partnership for Development, and Agenda 21 formed a sound basis for the report. His delegation believed that the United Nations was the proper forum for a dialogue on the report.

40. The alarming situation of the least developed countries, already highlighted in the Belgian statement on behalf of the European Community and the Finnish statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, deserved special attention in the Committee's deliberations at the current session. The Ministers of the least developed countries attending the current session of the General Assembly

(Mr. Syed Shah, Bangladesh)

had met to review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. Their recommendations should be urgently heeded. The international community must support the least developed countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty, expand trade, attract foreign investment, cope with natural and man-made disaster, protect the environment and implement economic reform.

41. The Bangladesh socio-economic development programme had focused on human resources development, population control, child immunization, universal primary education and agricultural production. The Dal-Bhat basic nutrition programme for the poor, launched by the Prime Minister, had made significant strides in poverty alleviation. The efforts of Bangladesh, however, were often frustrated by natural disasters such as floods and cyclones or environmental problems - drought and desertification in the northern part of the country and increased salinity owing to seasonal scarcity of water in the south-west. It hoped to receive international support in addressing those problems.

42. Mr. OLANIYAN (Organization of African Unity) said that over the past year, poverty levels in both urban and rural areas of many African countries had risen, owing to high rates of inflation and unemployment, the lingering effects of sluggish foreign trade in the 1980s and slow economic growth that could not keep up with high population growth. About 33 African countries had introduced economic reforms, including trade liberalization, reduced public expenditure, privatization and devaluation of their national currencies, but had experienced no substantial growth for lack of much-needed external assistance.

43. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) fully supported the promotion of sustainable development set forth in Agenda 21. It welcomed the first substantive session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Special Participants' Meeting of the Global Environment Facility, convened in Washington, D.C. in September 1993. In particular, it welcomed the progress achieved thus far on the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, as effective economic growth and development in African countries were often hampered by drought and desertification. It hoped the convention would be ready for adoption by June 1994, but that depended on the political will of the international community.

44. OAU welcomed the intention to draw up an agenda for development, which would be a useful complement to Agenda 21. The value of such an agenda would be greatly enhanced if it also took into account the need for a United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation by citizens of developing countries in the economic development process, as proposed in document A/48/142. Referring to the importance of South-South cooperation, he said that OAU welcomed the support of the United Nations and its agencies in the implementation of the report of the South Commission, in particular the building of South consciousness, the strengthening of educational cooperation and of cooperation in trade, industry and business in the South. It hoped such support would continue.

(Mr. Olaniyan, Organization of African Unity)

45. OAU hoped that, in 1993, the international community would renew its commitment to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Increased external financial support was more necessary than ever in view of the net outflow of capital from African countries in payment of debt-service obligations and their diminishing foreign exchange earnings, caused by declining prices of export commodities, reduced demand and difficulties in increasing supply. The establishment of a diversification fund for African commodities would greatly assist African countries' efforts to implement new development programmes within a framework of economic reform, including human resources development, industrialization and infrastructural and agricultural development. In particular, the fund would do much to enhance the foreign exchange earnings of African countries. UNDP had provided significant technical assistance in the preparation of a number of protocols to be adopted when the African Economic Community (AEC), established in June 1991, became fully operational. OAU welcomed that support and hoped it would be strengthened.

46. Referring to the international economic system, he said that trade, capital movement and the flow of technology should be accorded priority. Priority should also be accorded to addressing the problems of increasing protectionism by the industrialized nations, managed trade and unilateral measures, which were contrary to the rules and principles of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). A satisfactory outcome of the Uruguay Round would ensure better market access for the exports of developing countries and control protectionism in the global trade of agriculture and textiles.

47. OAU welcomed the initiatives by the developed countries to deal with the external debt burden and hoped they would continue. OAU resolution AHG/Res.219 (XXIX) called on the international community to enhance existing mechanisms and establish new ones to tackle Africa's debt problem. Management of bilateral debt in the Paris Club could be improved and the concept of eligibility under the Trinidad and Tobago terms should be expanded to include a larger number of low-income countries. Debt-for-equity and debt-for-nature swaps should be more broadly implemented. Above all, the foreign trade opportunities of developing countries must be enhanced through the liberalization of the international trading system. The lack of access to technology continued to be a significant obstacle to economic growth and development in the developing countries. In that connection, OAU welcomed United Nations activities in the fields of science and technology and urged greater international cooperation to ensure the transfer of technologies to developing countries.

48. Mr. SOH (Republic of Korea) summarized various factors contributing to slow economic growth during the past year and underscored the importance of adopting an integrated approach to development which recognized the interdependence of development, peace and democracy. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's preliminary work on the proposed agenda for development and appreciated his comprehensive treatment of such economic and social issues as poverty levels, health and education. It also agreed that human development was a crucial aspect of overall development.

(Mr. Soh, Republic of Korea)

49. With regard to operational activities for development, the ultimate responsibility rested with the recipient countries; the programme approach and national execution would substantially assist the developing countries. The expansion of United Nations interim offices should be approached with caution. Their main role should be to assist the economic development process under the guidance of the host countries.

50. A favourable international climate for international trade and development would be created by increasing financial resources for development, expanding access of developing countries to the markets of the developed countries, eliminating trade barriers and improving the terms of trade. His delegation advocated a prompt and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round in order to restore confidence in the multilateral trading system. Nations should avoid economic regionalism and the formation of trade blocs, which might discriminate against non-member countries. Industrial adjustment should be fostered in order to maximize the benefits of comparative advantage and forge a system of complementarity.

51. His delegation hoped that a detailed plan of action would emerge from the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, with a view to containing the population explosion in the interests of sustained economic growth.

52. His delegation welcomed the progress made thus far in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and urged the developed countries to adopt measures to transfer environmentally sound technologies to the developing countries. It hoped that the Commission on Sustainable Development would place high priority on such transfers and welcomed the initiative of the Governments of the United States of America and Colombia in organizing a preparatory meeting on the transfer of environmental technology.

53. His delegation hoped that the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields would reflect the principles and guidelines set out in General Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 46/235, and that the process would be carried out on the basis of consensus. It welcomed the measures which the Secretary-General had taken to reform the economic and social sectors of the Secretariat and strengthen its operational capacity.

54. The proliferation of emergency situations world wide made it essential to enhance cooperation and coordination among relief organizations. His delegation supported the increased coordination efforts of the United Nations through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. It also paid a tribute to all personnel and organizations involved in humanitarian relief activities for their courageous commitment, in particular those who worked in dangerous circumstances. Measures should be taken to ensure their safety.

55. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that his delegation looked forward to concrete results from the follow-up activities relating to such global undertakings as the Conference on Environment and Development, the eighth session of UNCTAD, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, as well

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

as to the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the World Conference on Women. The United Nations must face the social and economic challenges of a new era, and the restructuring and revitalization of its work in the economic and social fields should be energetically pursued.

56. A primary objective of the Fourth Development Decade was to enhance international cooperation for development. His delegation looked forward in that connection to the preliminary report of the Secretary-General on the proposed agenda for development. When reviewing the implementation of the strategy for the Decade, it was essential not only to increase joint efforts in the desired direction, but also to draw appropriate conclusions from past experience and failures.

57. The gap in standards and capacities between rich and poor nations remained a greater threat to universal peace and a stronger affront to human dignity than any threat arising from the admitted neglect of ecological prudence and restraint. An integrated global approach to solutions was needed and should encompass human development, protection of the environment, social and demographic problems, vocational training, health and education for all, the transfer of technology, the eradication of poverty and the fight against drug abuse. The implementation of Agenda 21 opened new vistas for attaining the objectives of sustainable development, and the recent activities of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Global Environment Facility, UNDP and UNEP to follow up the Rio Conference were promising.

58. His delegation agreed that it was essential to devise ways to cope with the serious problems of poverty, mass starvation and famine, external debt and environmental degradation. The situation was particularly critical in Africa. His Government had helped many developing countries apply various elements of a strategy to develop transitional economies to break the vicious circle of poverty in poor, peripheral traditional sectors.

59. Technology was a key element in sustainable development and should be adapted to the specific needs of each developing country. In his own country, technological research and development with respect to the use of water resources had proved very successful. His country attached great importance to concerted efforts to combat desertification and would support the conclusion of a negotiated convention to combat desertification.

60. His Government placed great emphasis on the development of human resources, which had become the key to his country's technological expansion and a marked feature of its extensive economic and technical cooperation with developing countries. The subject deserved greater attention in the Committee. His country, which had helped to train over 40,000 people from developing countries, particularly on agriculture and rural community development, was prepared to continue to share its know-how with any interested country and to play a vigorous role in international organizations and the United Nations development system in every sphere to which it could contribute.

61. Recalling the recent progress towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East, he underscored the tremendous potential for economic development in

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

the region. His Government had presented concrete proposals for regional cooperation and development, inter alia, with respect to arid zone agricultural development, alternative sources of energy, protection of the environment, desalination technology and health care. Such projects would also contribute to confidence-building for the cause of peace. His Government hoped that peace eventually would embrace all its neighbouring countries, so that a comprehensive settlement in the region would enable all those nations to devote their resources and energies to social and economic development through genuine cooperation in building an open regional economy. Such cooperation also would serve the interests of the entire world. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the recent historical changes and realities in the region would find expression in the General Assembly.

62. Mr. MUTHAURA (Kenya) said that economic and social conditions in sub-Saharan Africa were grim, as the region continued to experience zero or negative economic growth. Prospects for recovery were elusive despite the far-reaching economic and political reforms implemented by the countries of the region. The debt burden of the developing countries, and in particular those of sub-Saharan Africa, deserved special attention. The various measures taken by the international community thus far, although welcome, had not provided adequate responses to the key issues of reducing debt service repayments, promoting economic recovery and meeting long-term development needs. Since the end of the cold war, development and investment resources had been diverted away from developing countries to regions such as East and Central Europe. That trend, if not reversed, was likely to result in the marginalization of the developing countries, in particular those in Africa. There was an urgent need for the developed countries and international multilateral institutions to continue to honour their international obligations and increase substantially the level of ODA on improved terms and on an assured and predictable basis. His delegation fully endorsed the convening of an international conference on the financing of development.

63. The deepening trade tensions and imbalances in the world, combined with the deteriorating terms of trade of the developing countries, were of great concern to his country. Commodity-dependent countries, particularly those of Africa, had been the most adversely affected. Concerted international action to reverse the situation in the commodity sector should include wider participation in international commodity agreements, direct investments to diversify the commodities which countries produced and the transfer of technology to help developing countries achieve that objective. It also was high time to convene an international conference to address various aspects of commodity problems, as recommended at the eighth session of UNCTAD.

64. International trade was characterized by trade liberalization measures adopted by the developing countries, persistent threats of protectionism in the developed countries and the creation of trading blocs in various parts of the world. If the Uruguay Round would be successfully concluded by 15 December, that would be a severe blow to the free, transparent, open, rule-based and non-discriminatory trading system which the Round was meant to achieve.

65. His country had embarked on an ambitious structural adjustment programme with a view to liberalizing the entire economy. However, the process had a

(Mr. Muthaura, Kenya)

negative impact on the people, particularly the poor and disadvantaged members of society. Kenya and other countries in a similar situation needed continued support in order to allow time for structural reforms to bear fruit. Sufficient funding and realistic conditions were essential.

66. The efforts under way to follow up the Rio Conference and the programmes to implement Agenda 21 must be tailored to achieve sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Substantial additional resources must be provided and environmentally sound technologies must be transferred to the developing countries to supplement their national efforts. His delegation welcomed the progress made thus far in implementing General Assembly resolution 47/188 on the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification and resolution 47/191 on institutional arrangements to follow up the Conference on Environment and Development. In connection with the latter arrangements, he underscored the central role given to UNEP in the context of chapter 38 of Agenda 21. His delegation also wished to emphasize the role accorded the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in the implementation of Agenda 21, particularly at a time when human settlements in many parts of the world were characterized by unacceptably poor conditions. The situation was all the more complex owing to widespread civil conflicts and natural disasters. UNEP and the Centre must be provided with the necessary financial and personnel resources to enable them to carry out their increased responsibilities. The vacant post of Executive Director of the Centre should be filled. His country would continue to provide all necessary assistance in its capacity as host to UNEP and the Centre.

67. Lastly, adequate preparation was essential to ensure the success of the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

68. Mr. YOUSIF (Sudan) said that, if a major economic catastrophe was to be averted, the international community should look beyond the preservation of peace and the funding of peace-keeping forces and, in accordance with Article 55 of the Charter, endeavour to promote higher standards of living and solutions of economic problems. Poverty, hunger, environmental degradation, endemic diseases, economic stagnation, the debt burden, the erosion of the world trade system aggravated by the deadlock in the Uruguay Round, the flows of refugees, the selectivity and politicization of the provision of assistance by the industrial countries had all contributed to the current critical situation. Countries such as the Sudan had implemented structural adjustment programmes with high social costs which threatened their stability. However, the reforms involved had not met with corresponding support from the international community. Rather, Sudan's right to vote in International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings had been suspended, as had its right to receive $400 million in social development aid under the Lomé Convention.

69. Sudan had embarked upon a three-year economic recovery programme which had halted decline, raised the rate of growth to over 10 per cent, enhanced self-reliance and reduced inflation to 45 per cent. The programme was aimed at improving development infrastructures while strengthening social support. A

(Mr. Yousif, Sudan)

greater role had been given to the private sector and facilities were being provided to attract foreign investment.

70. The developing countries were increasingly being denied access to markets and foreign investment. They were burdened with debt and had difficulty in acquiring technology. In general, they suffered under the current world financial and trade order. Africa, in particular, was the victim of the worst international recession since the Second World War. The industrial countries had failed in the past decade to provide the agreed 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) for development assistance. Interest rates had risen and revenue from basic commodities had been eroded. The surpluses generated by disarmament should be redirected to development assistance and used to lower interest rates, cancel debts and provide favourable loan facilities. He supported the convening of an international conference on development which would give priority to the least developed countries and Africa.

71. External debt was a major obstacle to development and threatened social stability. There would be an economic and social catastrophe if the international community did not shoulder its responsibility and adopt a coordinated tripartite and flexible approach including debtor countries, creditor countries and financial institutions in the search for a radical and satisfactory solution. Decision-making in international financial institutions should be democratic and based on purely economic considerations, rather than political factors, as had been the case with Sudan.

72. Only through self-reliance and full cooperation between countries of the South could the developing countries achieve development. Public involvement was essential for self-reliance, and priority should be given to the agricultural sector; poverty, hunger and malnutrition could only be dealt with by increasing food production. Sudan, with its vast area and natural resources, could become the bread-basket of Africa and the Arab countries, if given sufficient external assistance. It had already achieved self-sufficiency in grain and sugar. However, it had been unable to export recent surpluses of grain owing to the above-mentioned political factors.

73. The human element was crucial for development. It was therefore essential to guarantee education, employment and health to the public. Sudan provided education opportunities to every child and had adopted a global illiteracy eradication programme. Ten new universities had been opened. The role of women in development was encouraged by family and rural development programmes. Young people, who formed the majority of the population, were also actively involved in development.

74. His delegation supported coordination between the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and attached great importance to the new Joint Coordinating Committee. He supported the proposal of the South Commission to establish a funding mechanism for world trade to compensate for the lack of foreign capital by providing short-term loans. Preferably, funding should be from the developing countries themselves on a basis of collective self-reliance.

75. The remedy for Africa's deteriorating economic situation was assistance for the exploitation of its untapped resources and the financing of development

(Mr. Yousif, Sudan)

projects. Enormous sums had been spent on conferences on development in Africa, but the continent had not received its fair share of assistance. Sudan had not even been invited to the recent Tokyo International Conference on African Development. The millions that had been spent on the peace-keeping forces in Somalia would be sufficient for the largest development projects in Africa.

76. The widening gap between the developing and the industrial countries made it imperative to found economic relations on a new basis of justice and equal opportunity. He called for full implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and supported the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Least Developed Countries.

77. Follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of the Earth Summit, and in particular Agenda 21, were also essential. In that connection, he welcomed the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as the results of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification. Furthermore, he attached great importance to the UNDP capacity-building programme for Agenda 21 (Capacity 21).

78. Mr. JAYANAMA (Thailand) said that the Earth Summit had forged a global consensus on sustainable development, but after the first stage of redefining development, a specific agenda must now be drawn up. Thailand agreed that the work of the United Nations in the political and security spheres should not be accomplished at the expense of development. The proposed agenda for development should be based on the objectives of peace, development and democracy. It should be an instrument for coordination, a synthesis of relevant international intergovernmental agreements on programmes of action and a vehicle for new areas of consensus. Social development and ecology should become the focus of development activities. The agenda for development must seek to elaborate a more coherent and comprehensive policy involving the issues of rehabilitation, reconstruction, human rights, democratization, peacemaking and peace-keeping. However, issues such as human rights and democratization should not become conditions for aid to development.

79. Thailand had embarked on a policy of economic and political liberalization emphasizing democracy, the rule of law and equality and social justice. An international environment conducive to the implementation of government development strategies required the liberalization of global trading policies, efficient allocation of resources and compatibility between trade and environment. His Government attached great importance to the success of the Uruguay Round in order to uphold a free and fair global trade system.

80. With its universal character and global convening power, the United Nations was the only international mechanism which could help to achieve the goal of sustainable development. His delegation had studied with great interest the Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization (A/48/1) and hoped that the three new departments established in the Secretariat would increase the sense of unity and purpose in development activities. His delegation was pleased that the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would be the coordinating body for the implementation of

(Mr. Jayanama, Thailand)

the follow-up to the Earth Summit and the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development. Thailand looked forward to participating in the intersessional working groups of the Commission on Sustainable Development. On the issue of the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility, his Government shared the view that it should be based on the principles of universality and transparency.

81. At the current turning point in international economic and development cooperation, his delegation hoped that the United Nations would fulfil its original mandate to become the international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. With that new opportunity came a new realism. Sound national policies reflected the political will to revitalize the United Nations which, despite the challenges it faced, was still humanity's best hope in the pursuit of peace, development and human rights.

82. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) said that various international studies indicated that economic growth in Africa over the past two years had remained below expectations. Thus, the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was more imperative than ever. It was deplorable that the commitments made by the international community for its implementation, particularly in the areas of financial resources and external debt, had not been met. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's interest in the implementation of the New Agenda, demonstrated by the formation of a high-level advisory group. For their part, African countries had made efforts to honour their basic commitments under the New Agenda. OAU had signed the treaty establishing the African Economic Community, which would soon enter into force. On the national level, African countries had established sound macroeconomic policies by means of budget restrictions and economic reform and adjustment programmes, while promoting privatization and the rationalization of the public sector. Unfortunately, however, external debt payments were consuming the resources gained from such measures. Furthermore, the proliferation of civil wars and regional conflicts had negated any efforts to foster economic growth. His delegation welcomed the proposals for the establishment of an African commodity diversification fund and awaited with interest the first report on the implementation of the New Agenda.

83. The growing awareness of the need to strengthen international cooperation for development was undoubtedly the impetus for the drafting of an agenda for development on the model of "An Agenda for Peace". It should be conceived as an instrument of coordination reflecting the desire of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions to work towards the same goal. Greater emphasis must be placed on ecology and social development, in addition to priority issues such as eradication of poverty, external debt and international trade. The agenda for development must also complement Agenda 21, which already reflected most of the development concerns of the international community. Regrettably, thus far the funds allocated in response to the recommendations of Agenda 21 fell far below expectations. Although many developed States had made an effort to meet their commitments, many had been slow in translating into action their promises to devote 0.7 per cent of GNP to official development assistance. The working groups on financial resources and transfer of technology of the Commission on Sustainable Development should play a fundamental role in the implementation of Agenda 21.

(Mr. Cisse, Senegal)

84. The forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development and World Summit for Social Development could have a positive impact on human resources development and the promotion of sustainable development, because of the unprecedented awareness among the international community of the growing interdependence among nations and the absolute necessity to promote a new partnership based on solidarity and collective security.

85. Mr. GUILLEN (Peru) said that the current international economic situation, characterized by globalization of economic activities, increasing international division of labour and, consequently, specialized production, making transnational corporations increasingly important factors in the world economy, was not promising for the economies of the developing world. The debt crisis remained an ongoing concern requiring a long-term solution, which must be found without delay. External debt was closely linked to trade. As long as developing countries had difficulty gaining free access to other markets for their exports, it would become increasingly difficult for them to meet their financial commitments. While developing countries had made commendable efforts to liberalize their external trade and reduce tariffs, industrialized countries were intensifying protectionist measures, thereby compromising the success of the Uruguay Round.

86. The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres was necessary in order to allow it to fulfil its proper role in response to the recent changes in the international system. His delegation attached great importance to activities relating to the environment and development. The excellent work begun by the Commission on Sustainable Development could make it one of the central axes of United Nations action. Lack of resources, however, continued to limit the implementation of Agenda 21; the commitments made under chapter 33 must be fully met.

87. One of the central objectives of the United Nations system was the promotion of international cooperation for development. A framework for a coherent international system of development cooperation must be established. The activities of the Bretton Woods institutions must be more closely coordinated with those of the United Nations system. An agenda for development, a necessary corollary to "An Agenda for Peace", should cover such aspects as rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, as well as the relationship between development and protection of human rights and democratization and the relationship between development and peace.

88. UNDP played a leading role in multilateral cooperation, not only as a funding source, but as the manager of such cooperation. His delegation was concerned that the changes in its structure and allocation of resources could cause major cutbacks in programmes of great importance to developing countries. The presence of United Nations resident coordinators should be maintained on an operational and technical level, because UNDP support in those areas had shown specific results in the field. Expanding the duties of the resident representatives to include political functions in an integrated office could be premature, however, since the role of the Organization in the post-cold-war era would be clearly defined only after in-depth discussion of "An Agenda for Peace" and the forthcoming agenda for development.

89. Mr. KHANI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the developing countries were facing a challenge to prove their collective capacity to bring about a real change in the international economic order, one which went beyond narrow individual interests. The industrial countries continued to pay scant attention to the problems of the developing countries. However, the Earth Summit had been a major turning-point in the North-South dialogue and had provided a joint platform from which to address the catastrophes facing the globe. That dialogue should be enhanced in order to strengthen the South-South dialogue and support development in the South. The Group of 77 was the natural forum in which to support the North-South dialogue and to work for the establishment of an economic world order based on justice, with a view to rebuilding confidence in international economic relations and closing the ever-widening gap between the industrial and the developing countries. His delegation supported the efforts aimed at achieving cooperation and coordination between the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77. The recent World Conference on Human Rights had made reference to the right to development, which was central to international economic cooperation. Particular importance should be attached to the agenda for development shortly to be published. The developing countries still suffered from underdevelopment, poverty and unemployment, which should be addressed at a global level. Peace could not be achieved without development, and self-reliance was a major national objective for the developing countries.

90. Development was a social issue which concerned all citizens, who were called upon to devote all their energies to the building of society on the basis of democracy, freedom and economic and political pluralism. Economic adjustment was based on an objective assessment of society and the economy. The private sector and private initiative still had a role to play, while the public sector should be strengthened and given greater freedom of action, flexibility and administrative autonomy. Every country should be free to adopt its own policies while respecting those of other countries. The linking of development assistance and trade advantages to particular policies was not consistent with the spirit of democracy.

91. In recognition of the importance of environmental issues, his Government had established a Ministry of the Environment and was cooperating with international organizations to draft environmental protection legislation.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.